

# Montana WIC Program Retailer Newsletter



Spring 2010

## Similac Infant Formula Product Changes

Beginning in May 2010 and continuing for the next two to three months, Abbott Nutrition will begin a transition period in which the size and labeling of the following products will be changing:

Current Product Name & Size	New Product Name & Size
Similac Advance EarlyShield - 12.9 oz	Similac Advance EarlyShield - 12.4 oz
Similac Isomil Advance - 12.9 oz	Similac Sensitive Isomil Soy - 12.4 oz
Similac Sensitive - 12.9 oz	Similac Sensitive - 12.6 oz
Similac Sensitive RS - 12.9 oz	Similac Sensitive for Spit Up - 12.3 oz

Please share this information with your staff.

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The length of the transition period to the new infant formula products depends on the retail system and the amount of inventory a retailer may have. The language on the Montana WIC benefits has been changed to include the current and new product name & size, so a WIC customer can purchase the version that is in stock.

The modified descriptions are as follows:

12.9 OZ OR 12.4 OZ CAN(S) POWDER SIMILAC ADVANCE  
12.9 OZ OR 12.4 OZ POWDER ISOMIL ADVANCE SOY  
12.9 OZ OR 12.6 OZ CAN(S) POWDER SIMILAC SENSITIVE  
12.9 OZ OR 12.3 OZ PWDR SIM SENSITIVE RS OR SPIT UP

Please remember to only redeem WIC benefits for the infant formula type and size listed on the benefit.

The UPC codes and wholesale prices of the infant formula products will not be changing.

**A full color Similac Product Reference Guide has been included with this newsletter to illustrate the upcoming changes.** Please note the transition dates for the concentrate and ready-to-feed forms of these formulas will be June/September, and the Expert Care formulas will change in July/August.

If you have any questions regarding these changes, please call Retail Services at 1-800-433-4298 option 2.

## Montana WIC Facts - February 2010

- WIC participants served - 20,728
- Authorized retailers - 200
- Benefits (checks) paid - 42,077
- Benefits (checks) rejected - 243
- Top rejection reasons:
  - ⇒ Missing stamp - 127
  - ⇒ Illegible stamp - 49
  - ⇒ Over Max Price - 34
  - ⇒ Missing Signature - 33

## Gerber Infant Cereal Introduces a New Look

Gerber announces a new look which will flow into stores starting April 2010. Along with the graphics change, Gerber's blend of vitamins and minerals, now called VITABLOCKS™, will be re-named NUTRIPROTECT™. Please be assured that Gerber cereals will maintain current product names, UPCs and ounce sizes, and only minor changes have been made to the ingredient and nutrition labeling.



## Reduce "Missing Signature" Benefits

We continue to find through compliance and education buys, that cashiers are not always requiring the WIC ID Packet when participants are redeeming WIC benefits. The WIC ID Packet is required, not only to verify the customers name against the name on the WIC benefit, but it will ensure you get the required signature on each benefit taken. This helps avoid the "Missing Signature Process" of contacting the Local WIC Clinic and asking the WIC customer to return to the store to sign the benefit, requesting State Office approval if they do not come back, and avoids benefits sent to the bank with no signature, which are not eligible for review.

In addition, WIC participants need only to present the WIC ID Packet to cashiers for signature comparison. It is not the responsibility of store personnel to determine if the Participant ID numbers match those printed on the WIC benefit or written on the WIC ID Packet, just check the signature.

## Submitting Items for Future Food List Consideration

Specific foods are selected for use in the Montana WIC Program through review by a panel of individuals using evaluation criteria based on federal regulations, availability, packaging, cost, product acceptability, marketing approval and nutritional value.

While the Montana WIC Program is not looking to add or remove existing food categories, we are hoping to add items to some of the existing categories.

For example:

- ⇒ 100% juice in 64 ounce plastic bottles - store brand apple, grape or orange
- ⇒ 100% juice in 48 to 46 ounce plastic bottles - store brand tomato, vegetable, apple, grape or orange
- ⇒ 100% whole wheat or whole grain bread in 16 ounce loaves - name brand or store brand
- ⇒ 12 - 11.5 ounce box of instant oatmeal - store brand, individual packets, regular flavor

To submit a food item for review, please send the product information and packaging label to Chris Fogelman's attention at the address below or [cfogelman@mt.gov](mailto:cfogelman@mt.gov). The items will be reviewed for addition to the Fall 2010 Food List and need to be submitted before April 30, 2010.

Montana WIC Program  
PO Box 202951  
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## Rejection Rates for Fruit & Vegetable Benefits (FVB's) Can Be Lowered

Fruit & Vegetable benefits are being rejected by the bank because the "Amount of Sale" filled in by the cashier exceeds the maximum dollar amount printed on the benefit. The FVB's have a fixed maximum amount of \$6, \$10 or \$15. If the customer purchases more than the benefit is worth, they may not pay the overage and the cashier needs to work with the WIC customer to determine which items to remove from the transaction.

Bookkeepers can catch errors and avoid additional bank fees by reviewing these benefits and correcting errors prior to deposit. Please refer to page 21 of the WIC Retail Reference Manual for instructions on how to correct WIC benefits. Redemption issues are easier to resolve before they are sent to the bank.

Please call Retail Services at 1-800-433-4298 option 2 or (406)444-4746 for guidance.



## Price Survey Notes

Please note that Tillamook cheese is not listed on the November 2009 (yellow) Food List. It was included on quite a few price surveys, but may not be purchased with WIC benefits.

Eggland's Best eggs are enhanced eggs and not approved on the Food List.

When completing the price survey and redeeming WIC benefits, please refer to the yellow November 2009 Approved Food List. A copy should be located at each register.

If you need more Food Lists, Redemption Guides, or Shelf Tags, please call 1-800-433-4298 option 2.

## Meeting WIC Customer's Shopping Needs

There are some WIC approved foods that have no minimum stocking requirement such as tortillas, soy beverage and some of the specialty milk items. Retailers are not required to stock these items, but WIC customers may be authorized to purchase these foods. WIC customer are encouraged to contact the store they shop at ahead of time to find out if the items are available.

If the item is not normally stocked, please work with the WIC customer to order the items and contact the customer when they have arrived. Customers that purchase these items are likely to do so for an extended period of time. Meeting the shopping needs of your WIC customers is beneficial to the customer and to your store! Thanks for your help!



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### Who do you call?

Retailers should contact their **Local WIC Agency** for concerns regarding complaints and general program questions.

Contact **Trish Kurek (406-444-5530)** at the State WIC office if your store will be changing ownership or you have questions about your contract.

Contact **Carrie Reynolds (406-444-4746)** at the State WIC office when issues arise with WIC benefits or prices change for WIC approved foods.

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TO FILE A COMPLAINT OF DISCRIMINATION, WRITE USDA, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ADJUDICATION AND COMPLIANCE, 1400 INDEPENDENCE AVE. SW, WASHINGTON D.C. 20250-9410 OR CALL (202) 720-5964 (VOICE AND TDD.) USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.